

From: [Message from the Administrator](#)
To: [Message from the Administrator](#)
Subject: Hurricanes Harvey and Irma - Update on response and preparation efforts
Date: Wednesday, September 6, 2017 5:13:40 PM



As we move into the recovery phase of our response to Hurricane Harvey, I want to commend the leadership of our colleagues in Region 6. Along with our state partners at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, they have leaned forward with a true sense of urgency and dedication to assist those impacted by this storm. I am grateful to the EPA staff from across the country who traveled to the region on short notice to assist with the Agency's many efforts, including:

- sampling water quality at industrial facilities and hazardous waste sites;
- assisting with mobile air monitoring in Houston and conducting air monitoring for the Arkema plant fire using surveillance aircraft;
- assessing drinking water, wastewater and sewage systems, and working with system operators to bring those systems back into operation; and
- conducting initial assessments of numerous Superfund sites using aerial images as well as being in direct contact with the parties responsible for on-going cleanup activities.

EPA's response to Hurricane Harvey continues to be a top priority. Our thoughts and prayers remain with the Texans who now turn to cleaning up their communities and rebuilding their homes and lives. This week we will have 60 more "boots on the ground" to serve as community liaisons, as they work to connect the citizens of Texas with important recovery resources and services.

While continuing these response efforts around the devastating flooding effects of Hurricane Harvey, EPA's organized emergency response program is now preparing for Hurricane Irma. This hurricane looks to be a fast-moving storm, with dangerous winds that could cause widespread power outages and damage to property across multiple U.S. states and territories. While Harvey caused extreme flooding, our biggest health and environmental concerns in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are potential oil spills and the potential impacts of power disruptions on drinking and waste water systems.

EPA headquarters emergency operations center, Region 2, and Region 4 are monitoring the storm closely and are activated preparing to activate in order to support assistance efforts of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and state environmental agencies. In preparation for Irma:

- Region 2 is working with managers of Superfund sites and other facilities in Puerto Rico that may contain oil or hazardous materials to ensure appropriate precautions have been taken to prevent spills.
- Region 4 is working with states, tribes, and FEMA to identify at-risk locations prior to the hurricane and will be ready to quickly assess damage after landfall, including to Superfund sites and drinking and waste water systems.

I extend my sincere appreciation to our colleagues in Regions 2 and 4 as they stand ready to replicate the preparedness and ongoing response efforts of our team in Region 6 in order to provide needed support around Hurricane Irma.

To follow our hurricane response activities, please follow:

www.epa.gov/hurricane-harvey

www.epa.gov/hurricane-irma